

**REMARKS****Summary of the Office Action**

In the Office Action, claims 7, 9-10, 16 and 18-19 have been allowed.

Claims 1-3, 5 and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,303,532 to *Philips* in view of newly cited U.S. Patent No. 5,966,914 to *Reents*.

Claim 5 also stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Philips* in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,923,316 to *Birnbaum*.

**Summary of the Response to the Office Action**

Applicant proposes amending claims 1, 11 and 13, and adding new claim 20.

Accordingly, claims 1-3, 5, 11-13 and 20 are pending for further consideration (claims 7, 9-10, 16 and 18-19 being allowed).

**All Claims are Allowable**

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 5 and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,303,532 to *Philips* in view of newly cited U.S. Patent No. 5,966,914 to *Reents*. Claim 5 also stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Philips* in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,923,316 to *Birnbaum*. Applicant traverses the rejection of pending claims 1-3, 5 and 11-13 for the following reasons.

With regard to independent claim 1, Applicant respectfully asserts that *Phillips*, *Reents*, and *Birnbaum*, viewed either singly or in combination, fail to teach or fairly suggest a trimming system for a user-operated ground vehicle capable of performing mowing and trimming operations, including at least, “a guide wheel mounted to a vehicle frame adjacent said trimming unit for maintaining at least one trimming wire of said trimming unit at a predetermined distance from a stationary object during performance of said edge trimming operations, said guide wheel being mounted on a resiliently biased bracket, said bracket being resiliently biased by a spring mounted between said vehicle frame and said bracket for allowing deflection of said bracket by a predetermined distance under the bias of said spring relative to said trimming unit and the

vehicle frame upon contact of said guide wheel with the stationary object," as recited in independent claim 1, as amended.

Support for these features recited in claim 1 can be found at least in paragraphs 10-15 and 26-43 of the originally filed specification, and in Figs. 1-3 of the originally filed drawings. Specifically, as shown in Figs. 1-3, the present invention provides a trimming system 16 for a user-operated ground vehicle 12 capable of performing mowing and trimming operations. The system may include a drive means operatively coupled to a drive system of the vehicle having the trimming system mounted thereon. The system may further include a trimming unit 46 operatively coupled to the drive means for performing edge trimming operations. As clearly illustrated in Fig. 1, a guide wheel 74 may be mounted to a vehicle frame 18 adjacent trimming unit 46 for maintaining at least one trimming wire of the trimming unit at a predetermined distance from a stationary object 76 during performance of edge trimming operations. Guide wheel 74 may be mounted on a resiliently biased bracket 78, which as illustrated in Fig. 1, is biased by torsion spring 90 mounted between the vehicle frame and the bracket for allowing deflection of the bracket by a predetermined distance under bias of the spring relative to the trimming unit and the vehicle frame upon contact of the guide wheel with the stationary object.

With regard to independent claim 1, the Office Action cites *Phillips* and *Reents* as teaching or suggesting the trimming system as recited in the claims.

*Phillips*, as illustrated in Figs. 1, 6 and 13 thereof, discloses a mowing system onto which a trimmer 34 can be mounted as shown in Fig. 1 for performing edge trimming operations. As clearly illustrated in Fig. 13 and discussed in Col. 8:55 – Col. 9:6 of *Phillips*, a trimmer guard including hoop 98 (denoted mounting bracket in the Official Action) is provided and mounted for resiliently deflecting along with vehicle frame 52. Further, as clearly illustrated in Fig. 6 and discussed in Col. 4:56 – Col. 5:5 of *Phillips*, a clamp 110 is provided for clamping around shaft 42 of trimmer 34 such that trimmer 34 is firmly retained in position during the trimming operation, and is further deflected along with hoop 98 having guide wheels 120 mounted thereon, as shown in Fig. 13.

In distinct contrast to the teachings of *Phillips*, as illustrated in Figs. 1-3 of the present invention and now recited in independent claim 1 as amended, the present invention trimming system includes a guide wheel 74 mounted to a vehicle frame 18 adjacent trimming unit 46 for

maintaining a trimming wire of the trimming unit at a predetermined distance from a stationary object 76 during performance of edge trimming operations. Guide wheel 74 is mounted on a resiliently biased bracket 78, which as illustrated in Fig. 1, is biased by torsion spring 90 mounted between the vehicle frame and the bracket. This mounting arrangement for guide wheel 74 via bracket 78 allows deflection of the bracket by a predetermined distance under bias of the spring relative to the trimming unit and the vehicle frame upon contact of the guide wheel with the stationary object.

Thus whereas the *Phillips* mowing system includes a trimmer guard including hoop 98 mounted for resiliently deflecting along with trimmer 34 and vehicle frame 52 (see Figs. 1 and 13 of *Phillips*), for the present invention, guide wheel 74 is mounted to vehicle frame 18 and deflects relative to the trimming unit and the frame (see Fig. 1 of the present invention). Thus *Phillips* fails to teach or suggest, “said guide wheel being mounted on a resiliently biased bracket, said bracket being resiliently biased by a spring mounted between said vehicle frame and said bracket for allowing deflection of said bracket by a predetermined distance under the bias of said spring relative to said trimming unit and the vehicle frame upon contact of said guide wheel with the stationary object,” as recited in independent claim 1, as amended.

Further, whereas the *Phillips* mowing system includes a trimmer guard including a clamp 110 provided for clamping around shaft 42 of trimmer 34 such that trimmer 34 is firmly retained in position during the trimming operation (see Fig. 6 of *Phillips*), for the present invention, guide wheel 74 is mounted to vehicle frame 18 adjacent trimming unit 46 (see Fig. 1 of the present invention), so that the present invention guide system operates independently from the trimming system. Thus *Phillips* also fails to teach or suggest, “a guide wheel mounted to a vehicle frame adjacent said trimming unit for maintaining at least one trimming wire of said trimming unit at a predetermined distance from a stationary object during performance of said edge trimming operations,” as recited in independent claim 1, as amended.

With regard to the teachings of *Reents*, which has been cited for disclosing a pulley system for driving a trimmer, Applicant respectfully asserts that *Reents* fails to overcome the aforementioned deficiencies in the teachings of *Phillips*.

Applicant therefore respectfully asserts that *Phillips* and *Reents*, viewed either singly or in combination, fail to teach or fairly suggest a trimming system for a user-operated ground

vehicle capable of performing mowing and trimming operations, including at least, “a guide wheel mounted to a vehicle frame adjacent said trimming unit for maintaining at least one trimming wire of said trimming unit at a predetermined distance from a stationary object during performance of said edge trimming operations, said guide wheel being mounted on a resiliently biased bracket, said bracket being resiliently biased by a spring mounted between said vehicle frame and said bracket for allowing deflection of said bracket by a predetermined distance under the bias of said spring relative to said trimming unit and the vehicle frame upon contact of said guide wheel with the stationary object,” as recited in independent claim 1, as amended.

As pointed out in M.P.E.P. § 2143.03, “[t]o establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claimed limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art”. *In re Royka*, 409 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). Since these criteria have not been met, Applicant respectfully asserts that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) should be withdrawn because *Phillips* and *Reents* do not teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 1, as amended.

In view of the above arguments, Applicant respectfully requests the rejection of independent claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn. Additionally, claims 2, 3, 5 and 20, which depend from independent claim 1, are allowable at least because their base claim is allowable, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

#### Independent claim 11

With regard to independent claim 11, Applicant respectfully asserts that *Phillips* and *Reents* fail to teach or fairly suggest a vehicle for performing mowing and edge trimming operations, the vehicle including, “a mowing system for performing mowing operations; a trimming system for performing edge trimming operations and being operatively coupled to a drive system of said vehicle for at least one of selectively and simultaneously driving said mowing and trimming systems, and a guide wheel mounted to a vehicle frame adjacent said trimming system for maintaining at least one trimming wire of said trimming system at a predetermined distance from a stationary object during performance of said edge trimming operations, said guide wheel being mounted on a resiliently biased bracket, said bracket being resiliently biased by a spring mounted between said vehicle frame and said bracket for allowing

deflection of said bracket by a predetermined distance under the bias of said spring relative to said trimming system and the vehicle frame upon contact of said guide wheel with the stationary object," as recited in independent claim 11, as amended.

Applicant respectfully asserts that independent claim 11 is allowable for at least the reasons presented above for the allowance of independent claim 1, and the additional features recited therein. In the interest of avoiding redundant arguments, the reasons for allowance of independent claim 11 are not repeated herein. Additionally, claim 12 which depends from independent claim 11, is allowable at least because its base claim is allowable, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

Independent claim 13

With regard to independent claim 13, Applicant respectfully asserts that *Phillips* and *Reents* fail to teach or fairly suggest a mowing and trimming system including, "a drive unit including at least one drive and driven pulley, said drive pulley being operatively coupled to said driven pulley to at least one of selectively and simultaneously drive a mowing unit for performing mowing operations and a trimming unit for performing edge trimming operations, and a guide wheel mounted to a vehicle frame, having said mowing and trimming system mounted thereon, adjacent said trimming unit for maintaining at least one trimming wire of said trimming unit at a predetermined distance from a stationary object during performance of said edge trimming operations, said guide wheel being mounted on a resiliently biased bracket, said bracket being resiliently biased by a spring mounted between said vehicle frame and said bracket for allowing deflection of said bracket by a predetermined distance under the bias of said spring relative to said trimming unit and the vehicle frame upon contact of said guide wheel with the stationary object," as recited in independent claim 13, as amended.

Applicant respectfully asserts that independent claim 13 is allowable for at least the reasons presented above for the allowance of independent claim 1, and the additional features recited therein. In the interest of avoiding redundant arguments, the reasons for allowance of independent claim 13 are not repeated herein.

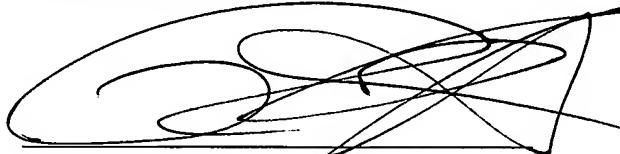
**CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the entry of this Amendment to place the application in clear condition for allowance or, in the alternative, in better form for appeal. Applicant also requests the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 04-2223. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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